

February 2009



Santa Rosa County District 1 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner

District 1
Commissioner
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With heartfelt thanks, my family and I appreciate your overwhelming support in electing me as your District 1 Santa Rosa County Commissioner. I look forward to working with and FOR each and every resident and business in our great county.

In these tough economic times, it is more important than ever for all of us to work together to meet the needs of our county and its citizens. The Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners has already taken action to help stimulate our local economy. As you can read more about it on the following pages, a goal setting workshop was held on December 16 and continued on January 20. During the public workshop in January, TEAM Santa Rosa EDC, Inc. presented their economic development plan recommendations and staff gave reports and recommendations on reviewing regulatory impediments to development, transportation impact fees, state, federal, and local stimulus projects, the upcoming budget process and a review of use of overtime in public works capital projections. The PowerPoint presentations and the entire meeting can be viewed on the county's Web site at <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/bocc/meetings.html>.

At the workshop, your commissioners voted to immediately:

- Suspend the collection of impact fees for calendar year 2009. Projects issued a building permit in 2009 will have impact fees waived and those paying installments will not be required to make payments in 2009, but will resume payments in 2010.
- Revise the Santa Rosa County storm water collection standard from 100 year to 25 year to match with state requirements on a case-by-case basis.
- Submit for consideration the projects submitted for the federal stimulus package representatives in Washington D.C. to seek support and other possible funding opportunities.
- Combine the plans review process of engineering and planning and zoning.

According to Dr. Rick Harper, Director of the University of West Florida's Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development, Santa Rosa County is in good shape when compared with the national economy. While things are not expected to improve drastically for at least another year, I assure you that your commissioners are working together to look at every option to ensure the economic turn around happens in Santa Rosa County first.

- Jim Williamson
District 1 Commissioner



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TEAM Proposes Incentive Fund to Stimulate Business Growth

After researching what other areas around the country are offering as incentives for new and expanding industry, TEAM Santa Rosa recommended the creation of a local incentive fund at the January 20 goal setting workshop. The proposed incentive fund would be used on a case- by -case basis specific to each individual company's need, to be approved by the board of county commissioners as potential projects arise. The purpose for these incentives is to retain or attract industry to Santa Rosa County. The benefits to the county would be the new dollars in the area and in the way of wages and taxes, thus increasing the economic wealth of Santa Rosa County.

While the details of current incentive packages are still being developed, TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council Inc. works with many partners and their investor base to create and maintain a business-friendly environment through the development and protection of federal, state and local incentives.

TEAM Santa Rosa will work with local and state governments to create performance-based incentives packages; these may include a combination of training grants, tax abatements and infrastructure assistance, and within the next year this list is expected to grow to enable Santa Rosa County to be more competitive with other states. The jobs a company brings are vital to the health of Santa Rosa County's economy.

Projects Submitted for Possible Federal Stimulus Funding

State Roads/Highways

• Avalon Blvd. – US 90 to Commerce Drive, FY10	\$13,784,000
• Avalon Blvd. – Commerce Drive to CSX RR Bridge, FY11	\$12,727,000
• S.R. 87 – Five Forks to Eglin AFB	\$39,932,000

Local Roads/Highways:

• Marty Martin Way/Whiting Aviation Park turn lanes	\$ 594,966
• Five Points intersection improvements	\$29,400,000
• Woodbine Road widening ROW	\$29,100,000
• Quintette Road (C.R. 184)	\$ 1,179,288
• Chumuckla Highway (C.R. 197)	\$ 3,167,794
• Navarre Beach Causeway bike lanes	\$ 1,243,959

Bridges:

• Navarre Beach Bridge Rehabilitation	\$ 575,000
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Airport Construction:

• Runway 18-36 Hold Bays	\$ 486,210
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Other:

• Navarre Beach Wastewater Treatment Facility	\$ 400,000
• Microwave System	\$1,680,000

Local County Projects Planned or Proposed Over the Next 18 Months

• Jail Expansion	\$ 3,720,000
• Navarre Beach Pier	\$ 8,000,000
• Jeff Ates Road	\$ 307,593
• Coral Street Traffic Signal & Median Modifications	\$ 700,000
• Crane Cove/Whisper Bay Realignment & Traffic Signal	\$ 1,500,000
• Chumuckla Hwy/Floridatown Rd. – Five Pts. to Esc. Bay	\$ 1,000,000
• Mulat Road	\$ 840,000
• Berryhill Road – S.R. 89 to Pine Ridge Road	\$ 560,000
• Nichols Lake Road	\$ 765,000
• Ward Basin Road	\$ 935,000





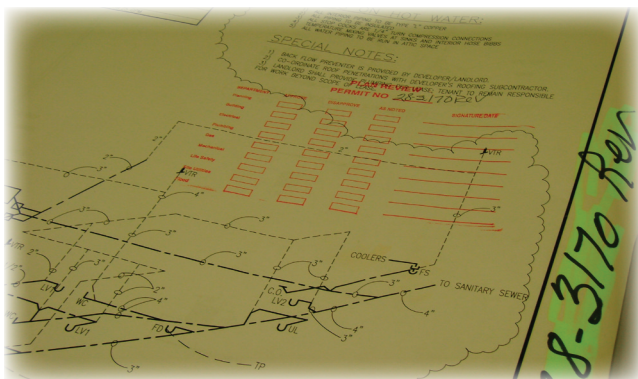
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Public Services Responds To Need For Customer Advocate Role

In response to a need for a more collaborative and comprehensive approach to assisting customers through the developmental process, Santa Rosa County Public Services Department has begun a number of new initiatives. The new efforts center around two primary changes.

The first is developing a project management approach to all commercial projects. Public Services Director Tony Gomillion acts as the overall project manager and other key employees have been identified to act as primary contacts at the initial discussion phase of a project. A commercial project spreadsheet was developed which tracks projects through all phases of the process, from plan review all the way through to the issuance of certificate of occupancy. This spreadsheet is used during a weekly review meeting with representatives from building inspections, planning and zoning and engineering. During these meetings, project notes are reviewed to determine progress, project information obtained by contact with the owner or contractor is reviewed, and staff determines if additional contact or efforts are needed to assist the customer through the process. In many cases that can include contacting third party agencies such as fire districts, municipalities, utilities, and others to assist the customer in obtaining necessary approvals.

A second significant effort that is in the final planning stages is the creation of a Development Service Center. This effort will create a one stop review and permitting process for all customers. Employees of the building, planning and zoning, and engineering departments will be combined into functional groups within the existing building department offices. This move will create a more central location for the customer to conduct their business, and allow for a more unified review and correspondence effort. Minor modifications of the building will be needed to accomplish this effort and it is hoped that the Development Service Center will be operational by the end of March.



Suspension of Transportation Impact Fee Questions and Answers

Why did the commission vote to suspend impact fees?

At a commission workshop on January 29, the Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners voted to suspend the collection of transportation impact fees for 2009 as an incentive to stimulate new local construction projects. Considering the current national downturn in the economy and rising unemployment, commissioners understand the need to create employment opportunities, including in the construction industry and with any business locating to our area would bring.

How long will the suspension be for?

Transportation impact fees will be suspended for the calendar year 2009, or January 1 through December 31, 2009.

What qualifies a project for the suspension?

Projects that receive a building permit during the calendar year 2009 will not be assessed a transportation impact fee. Projects that are currently on the installment payment plan will have payment postponed for one year, with impact fees not listed on their 2009 tax bill. Tax bills for 2009 have not yet been issued; they will be issued in November 2009. For example, a project that had installments due each year until 2012 will not have to make a payment for the tax bill received in November of this year, and the installments will be extended until 2013.

By allowing postponement of installment fees for the 2009 tax year, commissioners hope that the savings recognized from the suspension will act as a stimulus.

What types of construction qualify for the suspension?

Any new construction, both residential and commercial, that would normally be assessed a transportation impact fee.

My building is currently under construction and I have already paid my transportation impact fees. Will I receive a refund?

Projects currently under construction, whose permits were issued in 2008, would not qualify. Transportation impact fees that were paid in full at the time of the issuance of a building permit in January 2009 will be refunded. The suspension of transportation impact fees was created to stimulate new projects in Santa Rosa County. One commercial project and 33 residential projects will receive refunds.

I just paid my installment, will that amount be refunded?

Transportation impact fee installments paid this year towards a 2008 tax bill will not be refunded. Installments for the 2009 tax year that are billed in November 2009 and due in 2010, will not include impact fees. Those impact fees will be postponed by one year.

For more frequently asked questions and answers on the suspension of transportation impact fees, visit the county's Web site at: www.santarosa.fl.gov under "What's Hot."



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Resurfacing Begins on U.S. 90 in Santa Rosa County

The Florida Department of Transportation began resurfacing a six-mile stretch of U.S. 90, from Woodbine Road to Avalon Boulevard on January 5. Anderson Columbia Company, Inc. was awarded the \$5.9 million resurfacing improvement project.

On February 2, crews began installing barrier walls along the U.S. 90 westbound median and installing traffic shifts eastbound on U.S. 90 at the intersection of West Spencer Field Road. This will allow crews to begin drainage installation work in the median near West Spencer Field Road.

This work is part of the \$5.9 million resurfacing project on U.S. 90 which extends from Woodbine Road to Avalon Boulevard. Crews will mill and resurface the roadway, widen East Spencer Field and West Spencer Field intersections, and make drainage improvements. Crews will also replace signal loops, perform minor signalization upgrades and place new pavement markings along the roadway.

Motorists can expect minor traffic delays and lane restrictions to occur during construction. However, lane closures will not be permitted between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. The six mile project will take approximately one year to complete.

Connection Road in the Works

The developer of Santa Rosa Commons, where Publix and Target are located on U.S. Hwy. 90 in Pace, has confirmed that they have a preliminary agreement with Home Depot and the Bank of Pensacola to complete a connection between the shopping centers. That project is under design and they expect completion within the first quarter of 2009.



A connector road between Home Depot and Santa Rosa Commons is expected to be complete in late spring.

Library System Announces New Hours

In an effort to provide extended access to library services to meet the changing needs of our citizens, the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners announced the following new hours, which includes the addition of Saturday operations, at all libraries – Gulf Breeze, Jay, Milton, Navarre, and Pace, effective February 5:



The Pace Library on Patriot Place Boulevard.

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
(no change):

9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Thursday: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
(no change)

Saturday: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Santa Rosa County Begins Pace Resurfacing Project

Santa Rosa County Public Works began a roadway resurfacing project in the Pace area on January 27. The project will resurface Floridatown Road, from the bay to Highway 90 and Chumuckla Highway from Highway 90 to the Five Points intersection. The project will include the construction of turn lanes at the intersection of Chumuckla Highway and Giddens Road.

Minor delays can be expected, but complete road closures are not anticipated for the duration of the project. The work is expected to be complete by May 1. Please contact the Santa Rosa County Public Works Department at (850) 626-0191 with questions about this project.

Pace Fire-Rescue

From October 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009, Pace Fire-Rescue responded to the following calls:

- 199 fire calls
- 417 medical calls
- 66 traffic accident calls
- **682 total calls**